

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Of pending claims 1-23, 35, all were rejected. The claims have been amended as noted above. Reexamination and reconsideration of the claims are respectfully requested.

Claim 35 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Claim 35 has been canceled since its pending status was an oversight as assumed by the Examiner. Applicants apologize for this oversight.

Claims 1-8, 11-18 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tajima et al. (5,855,553).

Claim 1 has been amended to specify that the feedback device provides a greater force feedback to the first input device than to the second input device, the greater force feedback indicating the amount of difference between the first and second input distances. Thus, when one input device is moved a lesser input distance than another, the input device that is moved the lesser input distance will receive a greater force feedback. This is useful in teaching a pupil desired input movements. For example, if a pupil moves the first input device an input distance that is less than desired, the pupil will feel a push into the desired hand movement. The push is force feedback that is determined based the difference between the input distance provided to the first input device by the pupil and the input distance provided to a second input device by a mentor. Tajima et al. do not describe such a feedback device, among other differences. In fact, Tajima et al. describes a force feedback process wherein a large portion of force reflection is returned to more dominant input means (col. 16, lines 44-46) which is the opposite of that which is provided in claim 1 of the instant application. For at least these reasons, Applicants believe **claim 1** is allowable along with dependent **claims 6-8**. **Claims 2-5** have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 11 has been amended similarly to claim 1 and is therefore considered allowable along with dependent **claims 16-18** for the same reasons. **Claims 12-15** have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 21 has also been amended similarly to claim 1 and is therefore considered allowable along with dependent **claims 22-23** for the same reasons.

Claims 9, 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Tajima et al. (5,855,553)**.

Claim 9 depends from claim 1 and **claim 19** depends from claim 11 both of which have been differentiated from Tajima et al. for the reasons stated above. Therefore, Applicants believe **claims 9, 19** are allowable.

THE ADDED CLAIMS

Claims 36-44 have been added. Claim 36 represents prior claim 3 placed in independent form and claim 40 represents prior claim 13 placed in independent form. Both claim 36 and claim 40 involve visual feedback indicating a difference between the first and second input distances. Tajima et al. do not describe such visual feedback. The visual feedback 107 in Tajima et al. (as indicated by the Examiner) comes from image signals 406 and 407. The image signals 406 and 407 come from an image of the diseased part taken by the visual sensors 402 (col 17, lines 18-20). There is no mention of visual feedback indicating a difference between first and second input distances of first and second input devices, respectively, as stated in claim 36 and claim 40. Therefore, Applicants believe claim 36, along with dependent claims 37-39, and claim 40, along with dependent claims 41-44, are allowable.

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Amdt. dated April 30, 2004
Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 Expedited Procedure
Examining Group

PATENT

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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